



EPISODE 2x08:
"HAVEN"

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Previously on Firefly...

2x02 (Nu Du Shen) – INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL

ZOE and MAL are talking.

ZOE

...Just don't think it's a good idea to work with them is all. Mingo and Fanty may be more civilized, but they're far more ruthless than Badger ever was.

MAL

(angry, but softly)

You notice how thin everyone's getting of late? Engine parts flying every way which? We need the coin. You fixin' we go back to Badger on our hands and knees? He'll cut off our hands, shoot out our kneecaps... and then he'll stop laughing.

ZOE

I understand, Sir, it's just... things've been getting a little too hairy round here what with the fugees and Feds flanking us... not to mention that bounty.

2x07 (In the Shadows) – INT. SMALL SHIP – COCKPIT

Trystan Xun punches a button and the display glows brightly with the image of BADGER.

TRYSTAN

Oh how poor are they who have not patience. What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

BADGER

Ain't the least interested in your fancy psychobabbled poetry, little girl. I was assured that Trystan Xun was the best of the best, and would do right where the Orion Recondos 'ave failed.

2x07 (*In the Shadows*) – INT. SERENITY – MEDICAL BAY

Mal stands over Trystan.

MAL
(angry)
You wanna tell me who's payin' you to snatch River?

TRYSTAN
(smiling weakly)
There is no vice so simple as an assumption.

1x13 (*Heart of Gold*) – EXT. BORDELLO - DAY

Wash sweeps a pile of dry earth over a wood-and-rope contraption, securing and camouflaging the device.

WASH
All I'm saying is we're living pretty deep in the rough and tumble, and I don't see that changing any time soon.

Zoe rises up behind him, a large spool of wire in her hands.

ZOE
Nor do I.

She crouches, begins to wind the wire between one of two stakes buried deep in the ground, some fifteen feet apart.

WASH
Well, I'm not sure now is the best time to bring a tiny little helpless person into our lives.

Wash lies flat, secures the wire to the stake. He takes a pair of WIRE CUTTERS and cuts the wire.

ZOE
That excuse is getting a little worn, honey.

2x02 (*Nu Du Shen*) – INT. SERENITY – WASH & ZOE'S ROOM

Wash and Zoe are spooning on their bed. Wash is the little spoon.

ZOE
Every day, life seems to get more dangerous around here.

WASH

Well, that is the nature of what we do as thieving brigands, honey.

ZOE

...What if it wasn't? I meant... what if we weren't?

2x07 (*In the Shadows*) – EXT. HAVEN – DAY

Serenity sits on the dusty ground, airlock doors open.

Wash, Zoe, Hiroku and Book stand outside, next to a big pile of luggage.

Jayne slaps Wash on the back. He heads up the ramp and into the cargo bay.

Mal, stonefaced, salutes Zoe.

Zoe returns the salute.

Mal turns and heads into the cargo bay.

The doors close, and Zoe continues to hold her salute.

Teaser

INT. ALLIANCE PATROL BOAT – CHIEN'S OFFICE

CAPTAIN CHIEN sits at his desk, speaking to an ALLIANCE COMMODORE via WAVE MONITOR. On the monitor, the commodore holds up a small stack of papers.

COMMODORE

I assume this is another report about your 'Flying Dutchman'?

(sigh)

Captain Chien, the slavers in the Lan Ri Quadrant are becoming quite a problem. Your problem, according to MilCom's last order. You do not have the luxury to persist in chasing phantoms.

CHIEN

Sir, I investigated an open report of a Firefly-class vessel commandeered to assist during the crisis on Verbena last month.

COMMODORE

Do you have any idea how many Fireflies are out there? The *Happy Trader* was destroyed.

(beat)

Captain Chien...

The commodore removes his glasses and rubs the bridge of his nose.

COMMODORE (cont'd)

Louis, do you understand what this obsession of yours is doing to your reputation? Your service record to date is exemplary, but if you continue this delusional manhunt, I'll have no option but to take disciplinary—

CHIEN

Sir, take a look at the last page of the report. Please.

On the monitor, the commodore puts his glasses back on and shuffles through the papers, glancing at them. He studies the last page for a beat, adjusting his glasses.

COMMODORE

Louis...

(puts the report down)

I believe Parliament will be most interested in your findings, Captain. Please prepare a full report.

CHIEN
(smiling)
Yes, sir.

COMMODORE
There will be a commendation in this for you, Chien.
Perhaps even a promotion.

CHIEN
Yes, sir.

The Wave monitor goes blank, as the commodore closes the link. On Chien's desk is a FUTURE FAX, with a stack of pages – Chien's report – in the output bin.

The top page shows a GRAINY BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGE of a half-dozen people in a chaotic hospital emergency room.

RIVER TAM's face is unmistakable among them.

EXT. HAVEN – ESTABLISHING – EVENING

Haven is a small mining community. The main mine sits near the dusty town, with dried-brown farm plots lying around it.

EXT. HAVEN – EVENING

WASH and BEN HICKS (late teens, gawky, awkward, last seen in "The Big Stick") walk toward a small WHITE HOUSE with a newly-carved wooden plaque reading "WASHBURNE". They laugh as Wash moves his hand around as though it was a flying ship.

Wash is well on his way to growing his moustache back. Ben is trying to follow his example, but it's a sad effort thus far.

BEN
Really? No.
(beat)
Really?!?

WASH
I swear to you that is the <truth as rubbed against
Buddha's bare buttocks>! Not only did they let us take
off, but they helped us load the crates!

INT. HAVEN - THE WASHBURNE HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

ZOE chops up some vegetables and stirs a simple pot of soup. She pauses at the sound of a DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING, then continues.

Wash and Ben walk in.

BEN
(shaking his head, in awe of Wash)
Unbelievable!

WASH
(to Zoe)
Hey there, Lambie-toes.

Wash walks up to Zoe and she stops chopping. He kisses her on her cheek, and leans over the pot to smell it.

WASH (cont'd)
<Yummy>. Wife soup.

Zoe turns to kiss Wash. Ben looks uncomfortable.

BEN
I'll see you tomorrow then, Captain.

WASH
Eight o'clock sharp...
(shrugs)
...ish.

Wash offers Ben a jaunty, if sloppy, salute, which Ben returns, before heading out.

Zoe watches the interchange with a slight smile.

ZOE
"Captain?"

WASH
Oh, we have a whole chain-of-command thing worked out.

A quiet smile from Zoe before she busies herself around the kitchen.

WASH (cont'd)
I love that kid!
(moves to help her)
So, how was your day?

ZOE

Another day in the mine. Literally. And now...

(indicates stove top)

Wife soup. And yours?

WASH

(excited, close to babbling)

Probably the best I've ever had. Flying more or less to my own schedule. No one to order me around—not that I don't enjoy a few of your late night commands, sweetie, but it's really nice to be captain for a change, even if it's just a battered old crate and a kid who's barely old enough to—

He looks over the fresh VEGETABLES laid out in the chopping board.

WASH (cont'd)

Hey, where'd you get all this?

ZOE

Sissy Temkin.

WASH

She the one just married Derek?

ZOE

(nods)

Girl damn near talked my ear off, she's so excited to be married. Can't wait to have a whole gaggle of little ones. She's already got the first four names picked out.

WASH

(touching her arm)

Maybe we should get to picking ourselves, soon.

Zoe looks at him and gives him a peaceful smile.

ZOE

Sure you don't miss the getting shot at?

WASH

You know, I thought I might, but then I considered all the pros of a lead-free life. You know, little things, like getting to live long enough to see my kids grow up. Plus...

(jaunty salute)

I'm a captain, now!

Wash sits down at the kitchen table chair closest to the chopping board.

WASH (cont'd)

So, other than free food from your co-workers' spouses,
how was the mine?

Wash picks up a piece of carrot and pops it in his mouth.

ZOE

(deadpan, impersonating Wash)

It was great. Probably the bestest day ever.

Wash stops chewing, raises an eyebrow.

ZOE (cont'd)

What do you want me to say, Wash? It's mining. It's not
a whole lot of fun or excitement.

They look at each other for a beat, then Zoe looks away. That pot of soup is VERY
interesting.

WASH

You do want to be here, don't you?

ZOE

(false smile)

`Course.

(beat)

Just takes some getting used to is all.

Silence.

Zoe quietly ladles some soup into Wash's bowl.

WASH

Ben was telling me some of the miners're getting pretty
sick from the dust down there?

ZOE

(ladling her own soup)

It's the loose ore dust getting into lungs. Book thinks it
might turn infectious.

WASH

The things you learn at shepherding school...

(beat, then suddenly concerned)

You're going to be okay down there, though, right? Can't
be starting our family if you're coughing your lungs up.

ZOE

It's mostly the old timers who're getting ill.

WASH

Still...

ZOE

It'll be fine. Book asked Simon to examine everybody, next time the crew comes this way.

WASH

If Mal hasn't gotten everyone's arms hacked off before then.

Wash takes a spoonful of soup.

ZOE

What do you mean?

WASH

Nothing. I was joking. But, judging by your lack of laughter, I'm thinking not very well.

(beat)

You really that worried about Mal?

ZOE

You saw how he was when we left.

WASH

I know he's not exactly as friendly as the Fruity-Oaty-Pus at the moment, but he'll keep the crew alive and flying. He got you through the war didn't he?

Zoe gives him a sceptical look as she sits at the table.

INT. TAVERN – SAME TIME

CLOSE-IN on the face of MALCOLM REYNOLDS.

NOISES OF A BOISTEROUS BAR in the background.

WASH (VO)

I'm sure he's doing just fine, hon.

A meaty fist SLAMS into Mal's face.

As Mal stumbles back a step, we pull back to REVEAL—

Mal stands in the middle of a bar. We do not see who he faces – in fact, we watch the entire scene from the POV of Mal's antagonists.

MAL
(rubbing his jaw)
Now that surely doesn't seem like a reasonable response
to my assessment of the Alliance's policy on the
relocation of refugees.

JANYE comes up behind Mal, carrying two MASSIVE TANKARDS of ale, sipping from one of them.

He eyes Mal's opponents.

JAYNE
(handing Mal one of the tankards)
You waxing all political again?

MAL
Never do seem to learn.

A CHAIR is thrown at the two of them. They dodge out of the way and it crashes somewhere behind them.

MAL (cont'd)
'Course they're a lovely bunch, very well spoken. Know
how to get a point across.

JAYNE
You take the three on the left, I'll take the three on the
right?

MAL
Was thinkin' more that you'd take the five on the left.

Jayne shrugs: seems fair.

Mal grins and throws his tankard toward his opponents (and the CAMERA),
splashing them with ale. Our view of the scene is blurry and wet as Mal and Jayne,
both laughing, charge.

Then Jayne throws his tankard directly at us and—

BAM!—we

BLACKOUT

Act One

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – ESTABLISHING

The modest church is now completed.

BOOK (VO)
Repent, my friends.

INT. HAVEN – CHURCH – SAME TIME

Sunlight shines through the windows. The CONGREGATION, hot and packed in a little tight, shifts uncomfortably in the pews.

SHEPHERD BOOK stands at the front of the room.

BOOK (cont'd)
Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Our Lord tells us this. Sounds complicated, doesn't it? Sounds downright scary. But do you know what repent means? It means to change your mind. To change your path. To turn around, and choose a different way. His way.

DEREK stands at the front, a server for Book.

BOOK (cont'd)
Who among us here has made decisions along the path of life we wish we could change?

CLOSE ON Book's face.

BOOK (cont'd)
(smiling)
I know I have.

WIDE AGAIN: The congregants. A few of them quietly laugh.

BOOK (cont'd)
We all have. But God forgives us, because he loves us so. He forgives, and our past misdeeds are gone from his sight.

Derek smiles to Sissy Temkin, a young woman in a homespun dress, seated in the first pew.

BOOK (cont'd)

But unfortunately, life in this 'Verse isn't that forgiving, is it? We are not that forgiving, to each other, and more importantly to ourselves. And so we regret, wishing we could change what has already been done. But our Lord says, 'Follow me. Change your path. I am the way.'

BERNABE and MILLIE sit near the back, holding hands behind their TWO CHILDREN (an eight-year-old BOY and a two-year-old GIRL), who sit between them.

BOOK (cont'd)

What brings you here today? What brings your path here to this 'haven' that God has built for us? We've all come here for different reasons. Perhaps to hear the truth, and to find some peace in this 'Verse.

INT. HAVEN – MINE – SAME TIME

Only a few MINERS remain at the mine during the service.

Zoe works a big pneumatic drill.

She rests the drill for a moment. Wipes her brow.

One of the other miners hands her a bottle, which she gratefully accepts.

BOOK (VO, cont'd)

Maybe to find a new life from that which we've always known...

INT. SERENITY – MAL'S CABIN – SAME TIME

Mal is alone, a glass of whisky on the table.

BOOK (VO, cont'd)

...and leave our old one behind.

INT. HAVEN – CHURCH – SAME TIME

Book pauses for a beat.

BOOK (cont'd)

For our Lord says he is the 'way, the truth, and the life.'
And His way, his path, is not the easiest one, is it? It divides, even as it ultimately unites.

Book looks out at the congregation. He has the rapt attention of a few, but others are not listening, dozing in their seats or sweating, looking hot and restless.

BOOK (cont'd)
(sighs, smiles)
If you turn to page twenty-five of your hymnals...

INT. TRANSPORT – COCKPIT – SAME TIME

Wash pilots the ship; Ben leans forward in the co-pilot's seat, caught up in whatever Wash is saying.

BEN
(laughing)
No <monkey bottom's> way!
(ponders)
And she was doing this in the shuttle?

Wash nods, all casual and cool.

BEN (cont'd)
And he was....

WASH
Yep.

BEN
While the instructor was up in the cockpit?

WASH
As I told it.

BEN
But there must have been some kinda punishment or something?

WASH
They got away with nothing more than a questioning look from the instructor. I'm telling you the guy never guessed a thing.

Silence. Ben looks out of the cockpit window at the clouds and scenery below.

BEN
You're lying.

WASH
I'm not, *dì dì* <little brother>. I never lie. Ask Zoe.

BEN
I will later tonight.

WASH
Remember to behave yourself. I don't want to be explaining to Millie that she's got to spend her day with me instead of her kids because my co-pilot's passed out under my couch. Again.

Ben looks properly chastised.

Beat, then they both burst out laughing. Wash playfully punches Ben in the shoulder.

BEN
I thought Millie and Bern were gonna be there tonight.

WASH
Yes, but unlike you, she and I can handle our drink.

BEN
No you can't. Kaylee told me about how drunk you got on Canton.

WASH
That was strong stuff, designed to keep a bunch of mudders drunk and un-rebellious-like. Tonight will be about fine wine and good food.

Ben gives a look and they both start laughing again.

WASH (cont'd)
Honestly, if you insult my wife's cooking, I'll have to—

He reaches out to slap Ben, but the younger man dodges back, forcing Wash to move away from the controls.

The ship jerks, and they continue to laugh as Wash steadies her.

INT. BEAUMONDE – MAIDENHEAD – NIGHT

PATRONS crowd the Maidenhead bar.

Mal and Jayne sit at a corner table with THE HOLDEN BOYS (MINGO and FANTY). Jayne drinks and takes in the crowd while Mal watches the Holden Boys study a piece of DIGITAL PAPER, which seem to be a MAP OF A TOWN. There's a small sheaf of other pages folded in front of them.

As one, Mingo and Fanty look up.

 MINGO
Could work.

 FANTY
Indeed.

 MAL
Could work!? It will work.

 MINGO
 (shrugs)
Know of at least three crews tried to get at Weiland's
collection, but that paranoid old goat is quite well-
protected at Saint Christopher.

 FANTY
Might seem like a nice little town, all nestled in the hills,
hidden away from Reavers and the 'Verse, but they don't
take kindly to outsiders.

 MINGO
Heard they up strung poor Jasper Peek and his boys right
in front of their fine old cathedral.

Jayne looks at Mal. His nervous expression says "First time I'm hearin' this." Mal
shakes his head dismissively.

 FANTY
Very elegant how you get around the sensors and clear a
path on the ground in one fell.

 MINGO
Never seen anything like this tried before.

 JAYNE
We call it pullin' a Patience.

 MAL
 (stern)
No, we don't.

 FANTY
 (ignores Jayne)
It does seem like a good plan.

 MINGO
But we've seen all manner of good plans go bust before.

MAL

This ain't gonna go bust. This is gonna net us all a nice big payday.

Mingo pushes the digital paper back across the table to Mal.

MINGO

You do seem to have all the angles covered, Mal.

FANTY

Which begs the question, why are you talking to us instead of stealing the coins?

MINGO

Not that we don't appreciate our twenty-five percent cut, of course.

MAL

Twenty on this one. I've got to cut in a specialist to make this work.

FANTY

Since we find this job so intriguing, we'll pretend you didn't just suggest that your specialist's fee comes out of our cut.

MINGO

We also won't mention the suspicious role you seem to have played in Ott's arrest.

MAL

I came here to talk business.

JAYNE

They're just lucky they ain't dead.

FANTY

Ott is our business. He was one of our best *huen dahn* <rotten eggs>.

MAL

Yeah, well, I'm your best *huen dahn* now, and I'd take it as a kindness if you'd treat me as such.

Jayne shuffles through the papers, looking at them, eventually settling on the map.

MINGO

You are Jorgensen's favourite captain, and that does make us rather fond of you.

FANTY

But watch the <uppity attitude>.

MINGO

Still...

FANTY

If you can acquire the collection, we can line up at least three buyers within thirty-six hours.

MINGO

But don't be greedy. Take anything more and you might tempt Weiland to come out of retirement.

FANTY

Just the coin collection.

Jayne looks up from the map.

JAYNE

Don't see what the big deal is. Just a bunch of coins.

MAL

Coins from Earth-That-Was.

JAYNE

Can't exactly spend 'em.

MAL

Trade 'em for plenty of coin we can spend. Now, *bi jweh* <shut it>.

Jayne, a bit annoyed, goes back to studying the map.

Mingo and Fanty exchange an amused look.

MINGO

(to Mal)

Still haven't explained why you're talking to us before you have the coins.

MAL

You may have noticed that my crew's a little... light.

Mal glances down at Jayne's paper. He absently takes it and flips it around: Jayne was looking at it upside-down.

FANTY

Jorgensen mentioned that he didn't see the legendary
Mister Hoban Washburne on your last visit.

Jayne nods happily, giving Mal a "Yeah, that's better!" look.

MINGO

He seemed to miss him.

MAL

Yeah, well, everybody leaves, eventually. Right now, I
could use a good pilot and maybe an extra gun while
we're talkin'. Folks I can trust. Folks who'll follow orders.
Figured if I got someone you boys suggested, they'd
know to take this job serious.

(motions toward Jayne)

You just pick up strays, you never know what you're
gonna wind up with.

Jayne looks up from the map, sensing eyes on him.

JAYNE

What?

EXT. HAVEN – MINE ENTRANCE – AFTERNOON

Zoe, tired and dusty, walks out of the mine with a half-dozen-or-so MINERS. They
head in various directions, but generally toward the main street of Haven town.

OLD MINER

(coughs)

Gorram dust.

He takes out a crumpled packet of tobacco. He shakes it. Almost empty.

OLD MINER (cont'd)

Got any baccy?

ZOE

No, Bert, sorry. Maybe you shouldn't be smoking that stuff.

OLD MINER

Darlin', when you get as old and ill as me you tend not to
worry too much 'bout what a few fags'll do to you.

Zoe slows as the rest continue into town. She sighs and heads off on her own.

EXT. HAVEN – MARKETPLACE – LATER

Haven's "commercial district" consists of a dozen or so tents surrounding a ramshackle WOODEN SHED with "SUPPLIES" stencilled on its door. Each tent sells a different type of supply, food, or craft, but mostly this marketplace seems to be a social gathering. The VENDORS at each tent talk amiably to one another and the browsers.

Zoe browses at one of the tents labelled

JACQUE'S FRUIT AND VEG

She examines produce that is neither as fresh nor as clean as the food she got from Sissy Temkin.

She looks up as Book and little HIROKU approach, carrying some packages. Hiroku also carries a handwritten LIST.

ZOE

(nods a greeting)

'Roku. Shepherd. Thought you'd be giving your service right about now?

BOOK

Zoe. No, the service has just finished. On time, mind you. I have to listen to my sermons too, you know...

(smiles)

Hiroku and I were buying some items for the church fete on Thursday.

ZOE

Fete?

BOOK

Life is a little different here at Haven than on Serenity.

HIROKU

Hello, Miss Zoe. How are you today?

ZOE

(crouching down)

I'm fine, thank you, Hiroku. Did you enjoy the preacher's service?

HIROKU

It was too hot in the church, but he spoke very well.

Book smiles.

HIROKU (cont'd)
Most of the people were asleep.

Zoe smiles.

BOOK
Yes, well... Thank you, Hiroku.
(beat)
Hiroku, do you think you could find some more of the
items on the list for me while I get what I need here?

Hiroku nods and moves off. Book and Zoe turn back to the vegetables.

BOOK
So, how are you finding life on Haven?

ZOE
Takes a little getting used to.

Book picks up a twisted, unidentifiable ROOT and studies it.

BOOK
Certainly does.

ZOE
It's a good a place as any to settle down.

BOOK
Indeed it is.
(beat)
And is that why you're here?

Book looks at Zoe for a beat, but she's studying the produce intently.

ZOE
I'm here to buy vegetables, Shepherd.

Book sighs and puts down the root.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Mal sits in the co-pilot seat, in front of the WAVE MONITOR.

MAL
You're sure everything'll be ready by the time we get to
Saint Christopher?

It's MR. UNIVERSE on the Wave.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Of course, of course! No problem at all, Mallarooni.

Mal winces.

MAL
Remember the part where you, um, don't call me that?

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
At your service, my Mal-icious friend.

MAL
Can we not—ah, forget it...
(beat)
Just make sure everything's set. We break atmo soon's
our new pilot gets here.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
New pilot? I thought you were the pilot, my Mal-
contentious compadre, and it seems to me that this job
won't require a bit of fancy flying, will it?

MAL
Shouldn't, but it could be that Wash has never explained
to you the unusually high percent of our jobs that have
unforeseen complications.

On the monitor, Mr. Universe shrugs.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Speaking of the illustrious Mister Washburne, have you
heard from him? How's my former school chum faring?
And his beautiful wife? Bored of him yet? Ready to leave
him for me?

MAL
Haven't spoken to them recently.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Shame. You know, talking's a good thing—

MAL
I can tell that's your motto.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Seriously, Mally, you never know when you may—

Mal turns down the volume on the Wave monitor. Mr. Universe continues to ramble
on silently.

Mal leans back in his chair and stares out of the cockpit window.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME

KAYLEE works on the undercarriage of the HOVER-MULE, while JAYNE examines an array of weapons, meticulously placing them in the vehicle's storage compartments.

JAYNE

Sure she's gonna run smooth, Kaylee? I wanna make sure she runs smooth.

KAYLEE

She'll be just fine.

SIMON and RIVER TAM are on the UPPER CATWALK, leaning on the railing, looking down.

SIMON

First, all those questions about our medical supplies, and now this. Why the sudden interest in these details, Jayne?

RIVER

You're not the captain.

Jayne puts down the gun he was holding. Stands up straight.

JAYNE

Yeah, well, with Zoe gone, I'm second.

Kaylee pokes her head out from under the hover-mule.

KAYLEE

Really?

JAYNE

Yeah, 'course. Well... Who else'd be?

SIMON

Actually, if you go by seniority, I believe that would be Kaylee.

KAYLEE

Really?

JAYNE

Kaylee ain't—

KAYLEE

Shiny!

(snaps a finger)

Jayne, I take my coffee with seven – no eight – sugars.

On the upper catwalk, Simon and River laugh, and Jayne looks like he's about to protest, but they all hear a FOOTSTEP by the open airlock door.

They all turn to look.

Jayne's the first to react, snatching up a rifle and aiming it at the unseen newcomer.

JAYNE

Yao noo!

Kaylee sits up so quickly she almost hits her head on the hover-mule.

KAYLEE

Cap'n!

Simon turns around, yelling toward the bridge.

SIMON

I think the new pilot's here, Captain!

INT. HAVEN - THE WASHBURNE HOUSE – LATER

In the kitchen, Zoe hums a lullaby as she chops vegetables, preparing a large dinner.

A BANG – like a GUNSHOT – from outside.

Startled, Zoe stops chopping and heads to the window.

Leaning low, she looks out, but can't see anything, or anybody.

Another BANG.

She moves briskly to a cupboard, opens it and takes out a RIFLE, which stands next to a broom and ironing board.

She heads to the front door, weapon ready.

Another BANG.

She moves to the door, opens it and steps outside to

THE PORCH

She cautiously peers around the corner.

It's Wash with some CHILDREN, laughing and playing with some BANGERS. Wash lights another and throws it over the open ground near the house.

It explodes in mid air and all the children jump and laugh.

Zoe deflates and sighs.

Wash and the kids notice her, the children eying the rifle.

Zoe moves toward them. They scatter and run off, some laughing, some genuinely scared.

ZOE
(after the children)
Hey! Whe're you going?

Wash walks up the steps toward her.

WASH
Maybe it's 'cos you got a gun in your hand, honey.

ZOE
Less dangerous than those bangers.

WASH
Perfectly safe! I wasn't juggling them. I swear.

He kisses her on the cheek, but she cuts it off quickly, pulling back a bit.

ZOE
Wash, you can't be messin' about with dangerous stuff around kids.

WASH
Says the woman with the gun.

Zoe can't say anything. Looks down, defeated.

WASH (cont'd)
Bao bei...

Wash tries to take her free hand. Zoe pulls it away, not looking at him.

WASH (cont'd)

This is Haven, sweet pea, not some *gos se* part of the
'Verse where you need to treat everyone like a threat.

Zoe glares at him.

WASH (cont'd)

Zoe, I didn't mean....

But Zoe just turns away, slamming the door behind her as she goes back into the house.

Act Two

INT. HAVEN – THE WASHBURN HOUSE – KITCHEN – EARLY EVENING

Wash, Ben, Book, Millie, Bernabe, Derek, and Sissy sit at the table. It's friendly, but crowded, with little room to move.

There's an empty BOTTLE OF WINE on the table, and the group is already on their second one. Everyone's got a glass of wine except Sissy, who has water.

Zoe prepares food at the counter, moving awkwardly around the crowd.

BOOK

So they really said that to you?

BERNABE

(nods)

The *hwoon dahn* <bastards> wouldn't agree to anything
above a thousand for the whole of next month's quota.

Wash stage yawns.

MILLIE

I second that. As exciting as mining can be, dear...

(playful poke to Bernabe's side)

This ain't the time for shop-talk. Now's the time for good
food and good friends.

WASH

On the subject of good food, what has happened to the
food, my <favourite warrior woman>?

Zoe doesn't look up from her preparation.

ZOE

Won't come any quicker, you just sitting there.

Eyes turn toward Wash, who offers a weak smile and a vague shrug.

WASH

Good point, *bao bei*.

Wash tries to stand, but his end of the table is crowded.

ZOE

(turning)

Honey, be—

He winds up knocking a bottle of wine—which Book barely catches—and his glass—which no one does.

ZOE (cont'd)

—careful.

Wash grabs his napkin and sops up the mess.

WASH

Too late...

(to Ben, who is nearest Zoe)

Could you help Zoe?

BEN

(saluting)

Aye, aye, Cap'n!

Ben bounces out of his seat, trying to move to help Zoe, but even though he's in a better position than Wash, it's no easy task, given how crowded the room is.

MILLIE

I can help, too—

Millie starts to stand, but her chair knocks into Zoe, who has been forced to move back to give Ben some room.

ZOE

No, Millie, that's fine. Ben, if you could just reach—

Zoe tries to point at basket of bread. Sissy and Book move to help. It's chaos, everyone talking and moving at the same time.

ZOE

—the bread.

SISSY

I can help, too.

MILLIE
Really, Zoe, it's no problem.

DEREK
Sissy, maybe you shouldn't, after all you're—

ZOE
Everyone sit down, I am—

DEREK (over Zoe)
—pregnant.

ZOE (cont'd)
FINE!

Uncomfortable beat.

Then Zoe looks down as everyone congratulates Sissy.

BERNABE
Pregnant? Already!

MILLIE
Congratulations, Sissy!

Sissy is flushed, excited, but a little embarrassed at the attention.

SISSY
Derek, I thought we were gonna wait to tell folks!

DEREK
(beaming, already the proud papa)
They're our friends, Sissy, why shouldn't we tell 'em?

SISSY
Well, now that y'all know... I'm so happy! Always wanted little ones, and—
(gushes)
—it's all happened so quick! Me an' Derek are scarcely married, and now we got a little one on the way!

Zoe glances at Wash. An awkward look passes between them.

BOOK
Must've happened on the wedding night. That's good luck.

BEN
Or maybe a little before!

Sissy reddens but laughs.

ZOE
(somewhat sharply)
Ben. The bread.

Zoe's tone quiets the room, and when Ben puts the CERAMIC PLATTER filled with rolls on the table, the SCRAPING noise seems painfully loud.

Beat.

EXT. SPACE

Serenity sails serenely through the black.

SIMON (VO)

Are you sure this is a good idea, Captain?

INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL/BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Mal, Jayne, Simon and Kaylee stand in a tight cluster in the foredeck hall, right at the open door of the bridge.

JAYNE

'Course it's a good idea. It's a ruttin' brilliant plan. Like takin' candy from a baby.

SIMON

A paranoid, superstitious, seventy-five year-old baby. But that's not what I meant.

MAL

(to Jayne)

I appreciate the vote of confidence in the plan, but I believe the good doc was referrin' less to the job and more to the choice of replacement pilot.

JAYNE

(now getting it)

Gotta say, Mal, was wonderin' about your choice my own self.

MAL

Ain't my choice, at all. I gotta take what Mingo and Fanty sent.

Kaylee, arms crossed somewhat protectively, throws a suspicious glance in the direction of the bridge.

KAYLEE

Can we trust her, Cap'n?

WOMAN (OS)
(from the bridge)
You do realize I can hear every word you're saying, right?

As a group, they start, like children caught trying to get into the cookie jar.

Mal peers up into the bridge.

MAL
Reckon we can trust her 'bout the same as Jayne when he
joined the crew.

Beat, as that sinks in for the others.

Meantime, we move onto

THE BRIDGE

To see the WOMAN in question, who is blonde, petite, not unattractive, filled with the caged, restless energy of a leashed panther even as she sits at Serenity's controls.

SIMON (OS)
Captain, if that was meant to inspire confidence—

The woman in question—NICO, formerly Ott's own pilot—grins more than a bit maniacally.

MAL (OS)
Can't say it was, doc.

INT. HAVEN – THE WASHBURNE HOUSE – KITCHEN

Sissy and Ben help Zoe finish cleaning. Everyone else still sits at the table.

WASH
So I'm cool and calm getting through this canyon, barely
wider than the ship.
(to Sissy)
I mean, you could reach out and pick the flowers off the
ground—

DEREK
Thought you said it was snowy.

WASH
(ignores Derek as he would Jayne)
When the crazy purple-bellied <baboon> fires a missile
into the side of the mountain in front of us.

He pauses and leans back in his chair, letting the scene sink in.

WASH
Huge boulders raining down in front of us. Captain was
panicking like a man on fire; he thought he was gone for.
But I was cool and collected. Reflexes took over, and we
sailed through with not a scratch to the paint work.

ZOE
(smiling)
Way I recall it, husband, the paint may have been
unscratched, but your seat was a little damp.

Wash smiles up at Zoe and there is laughter all around the table.

MILLIE
That seems more likely.

Ben and Sissy return to the table, the tidying up not finished.

BEN
(sitting)
Come to think of it, every story I've heard, he's always
cool and calm.

WASH
Oh, come on, I am always calm.

BERNABE
And I'm the king of all Londinum and wear a shiny hat.

DEREK
I think we're bein' a little unfair, right, Shepherd?

BOOK
Well, perhaps a bit, Derek. I suppose his flying is like....

Beat.

BERNABE
(chiming in)
A drunken duck.

MILLIE
A sheep off a cliff.

BOOK
(laughing)
No, no. I think that that implies too much focus. I think that Wash's flying is more like a leaf on the wind.

WASH
(excited)
I like it! I'm a leaf on the wind!

Wash moves his hand like a leaf on the wind, as the rest of the table laughs.

Zoe continues tidying up, alone.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Nico pilots, and Mal is in the co-pilot's chair, talking to Mr. Universe via the Wave monitor.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Remember, Mal, don't dilly-dally. It's not going to take them long to figure out what I've done. I figure you'll have less than an hour. Probably a lot less.

MAL
You sure about this?

Mr. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Head straight on in.

NICO
This is stupid. They'll see us.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
That, my beautiful lioness, is the point. Have you noticed her hair, Mal? Tresses like gold. She's almost enough to make me forget about my Zoe. You are one lucky—
(beat)
Huh.

Nico rolls her eyes.

On the Wave monitor, Mr. Universe is distracted, fiddling with keyboards and dials.

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)
Now, that's interesting.

Mal leans closer to the monitor, as if he can actually see what Mr. Universe is doing.

MAL

Interesting? Interesting how? Interesting like it's not gonna work?

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)

Interesting like someone else mucked with their systems today.

MAL

That somethin' I should be worried about, Universe?

MR. UNIVERSE (via Wave)

Probably not. Probably maintenance or some kids playing around. I can look into it if you— Oh! Hang on!

MAL

What? Do they see us?

MR. UNIVERSE

Yes, they do. They most definitely do.

EXT. SPACE

The planet of SAINT CHRISTOPHER looms in the distance in front of Serenity.

Directly in Serenity's path is a small SATELLITE, covered with antennae. It swings toward Serenity, "looking" at it.

MR. UNIVERSE (VO, cont'd)

They just think you're someone else.

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – EVENING – ESTABLISHING

Saint Christopher is a beautiful, Alpine-looking village nestled in a valley in a massive, craggy mountain range. Population: five hundred or so.

UPON CLOSER INSPECTION

We see that its winding, cobblestone streets lead to a broad TOWN SQUARE.

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – TOWN SQUARE – SAME TIME

The town square is quaint and serene, with a GIANT FOUNTAIN at its center, and a CATHEDRAL, the tallest building in the town, on one side.

FOLKS walk through the town square, singly and in small groups. Among them are a BOY of perhaps eight, and his FATHER.

BOY

—was saying that we're not really as safe as we think we are.

FATHER

That's nonsense. We're protected by the power of Saint Christopher.

The father looks up at the cathedral and makes the sign of the cross.

After a beat, the boy does the same.

Almost as if on cue, the church bells RING.

FATHER

You see, son? We—

He cuts himself off as the bells turn from lazy to urgent.

Folks stop and look around; something is WRONG.

BOY

Father, what is it?

A blaring AIR RAID SIREN drowns out the bells.

FATHER

Come, son! We need to get to our shelter!

The father takes his son's hand and rushes toward one of the side streets.

FATHER (cont'd)

(to the crowd)

To your homes, everyone! To your shelters! They are coming! REAVERS!

Act Three

EXT. HAVEN – THE WASHBURNE HOUSE – NIGHT

The party has moved outside.

Everyone except Zoe and Book sits around a small bonfire in the street, where Wash holds court, animatedly telling a story. Some distance away is—

THE PORCH

—Where Book sits smoking a CIGAR, quietly watching the others.

Zoe comes out onto the porch.

BOOK
It was a lovely meal, Zoe.

ZOE
Certainly helps having some fresh food. No protein here.

BOOK
(smiling)
One of the advantages of living dirtside.

She sits down next to him. They sit in silence for a few beats, looking out at the others.

BOOK (cont'd)
(indicating Wash at the bonfire)
He's fitting in quite well, isn't he?

ZOE
Bit of the natural showman, my mister.

BOOK
I believe he enjoys a larger audience.
(beat)
How about you? How's it working out in the mines?

Beat.

Silence on the porch. Laughter from the bonfire.

Book stubs out his cigar and places the remainder in his shirt pocket.

BOOK (cont'd)
That good, huh?

ZOE
(uncomfortable)
It's not all bad. Just...
(beat, looks away)
Was getting too difficult to think about starting a family.
Seems we were always looking over our shoulders and
finding Alliance or bounty hunters or some other kind of
wei shian dohn woo <dangerous creature> back there.
(beat)
If I have to look after the crew and the Captain, how
could I ever find time to look after young ones?

Book looks off in the distance.

BOOK
Mal knows how to look after himself.

ZOE
I don't know anymore, preacher.

A questioning look from Book.

ZOE (cont'd)
He just doesn't seem to know what's right and what's
wrong since... since she's gone.

BOOK
There are lots of folk in the 'Verse who don't know that.
It's a case of doing the right thing even if it isn't the
smartest thing.

ZOE
He used to know that. Now...
(beat)
Maybe I owed it to Mal to stay.

BOOK
Would it have helped him?

ZOE
Maybe. Could have looked after the crew.

BOOK
I don't think Mal would intentionally let harm come to any
of them.
(beat)
Even Jayne.

Zoe doesn't respond.

Beat as they look down at the rest. Wash and Millie are now dancing stupidly as Bernabe attempts to play the banjo.

BOOK (cont'd)

Do you think Haven is where you should be, Zoe?

ZOE

Better place to raise a family than out in the black.

(beat, looking at her husband)

Wash wants to be here.

BOOK

That's not what I asked.

As Zoe and Book watch, Wash bows deeply and comically to Millie, thanking her for the dance.

ZOE

(smiles weakly)

You're pushier than I remember, preacher.

Book waits for more for a beat. Two.

Doesn't get one.

They sit in silence, watching the laughing group at the bonfire.

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – TOWN SQUARE – EVENING

The town square is deserted.

The air raid siren BLARES. And blares and blares and blares.

The HOVER-MULE skids into view from one of the side streets, its engine straining. Nico steers it recklessly. In the backseat, Mal and Jayne hold on for dear life.

Everyone shouts over the noise.

MAL

GorRAMmit, woman! Who taught you how to drive?!?

NICO

Self-taught. Now shut it! That siren is *ma fuhn*
<complication> enough!

JAYNE

I'm inclined to agree, Mal!

Nico, largely ignoring them, scans the town square, then turns back.

NICO
Where to?

MAL
What?

NICO
Where. Are. We. Going?!?

Mal nods, now hearing the question. He turns to Jayne, who stares at him blankly for a beat, then looks down.

Jayne reaches down and pulls up a PIECE OF DIGITAL PAPER—the map from earlier—trying to puzzle out.

MAL
Oh, for the love of— It's upside down again!

JAYNE
Huhn?

MAL
(turning the paper around)
The map is upside down!

In the driver's seat, Nico rolls her eyes and guns the engine. As Mal and Jayne hold on for dear life, the map goes flying.

NICO
(to herself)
Backbirths.

EXT. HAVEN - THE WASHBURNE HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone is around the bonfire. Sissy, Derek, Millie and Book dance, Bernabe plays the banjo, and Zoe claps along.

Wash and Ben sit to one side, passing a largely-empty bottle between them. Ben hangs on Wash's every word.

BEN
(drunk shocked)
NO!

WASH
Yes! It's terrible and wrong, but, but...
(sighs)
I was the big man and let it slide, in return for his help
when I needed it.

Beat. Ben looks like he has something very important on his mind.

BEN
I wish you and me were like that. You know like, you and
Universe were at flight school together, and Mal and Zoe
are old war buddies.

WASH
Benny boy, me and you, we're like this close.

Wash interlaces his fingers.

BEN
(interlacing his own fingers)
That close?

WASH
That close.

Ben looks overcome with emotion. He moves forward to hug Wash.

BOOK (OS)
Am I interrupting something?

Book has come over to join them.

BEN
(slurring)
Sorry, Shepherd. Me and Wash, we're, like, this close.

He tries clumsily to interlace his fingers to show Book.

BOOK
Oh that's... very good Ben. Do you think that you could go
and take my place in the dancing?

Ben looks to Wash. Wash nods his head in approval.

Ben gets up drunkenly, salutes Wash, bows to Book, and staggers off to join the
others.

WASH
Between you and me, preacher, I don't think he can do it.

Book sits down next to Wash.

BOOK

Do what?

WASH

Take your pl... Well, anything to do with dancing, at this point.

Book takes out his cigar stub and lights it.

BOOK

Millie was telling me that she likes having you here. Less time piloting, more time with her children.

(beat)

Also, while I believe she'd be loathe to admit it to you, she thinks you're quite funny.

WASH

Well, Shepherd, I like it. Haven's great and Ben is fun. Makes the round trips to Solomon and the processing plants go a lot faster. I love it here, but Zoe....

BOOK

Is struggling to fit in.

Wash grimaces.

WASH

I mean, she gets along with Millie and Bern and Ben and some of the others here but all this... It's not Serenity.

Back at the bonfire, Zoe and Ben are dancing... Well, mostly, Zoe is helping Ben remain upright.

BOOK

She could be happy here. It's safe. A good place to raise a family.

WASH

I know Zoe. This isn't what she really wants. I mean she wants to settle down and have a family, but she didn't want to leave Serenity like we did. She thinks that this is the best for both of us, that she can tough this out, and in a year's time she'll be happy here.

BOOK

Won't she?

Closer to the bonfire, Ben stumbles and knocks into Sissy. Ben is apologetic, but Derek is angrily protective of Sissy, although both Sissy and Zoe laugh.

WASH

She's known nothing but fighting and travelling her whole life. Did you know her entire family was in the military?

(shakes his head in disbelief)

Absolutely everyone. She once said to me that it always seemed there were more funerals to go to than birthdays.

This...

(broad sweep, taking in all of Haven)

...life is what Zoe has wanted for so long, but I think she feels like she abandoned the one family she had.

BOOK

What about her family with you? Isn't that the most important thing?

Wash looks back to the circle around the bonfire, where Zoe has just finished helping Ben sit down.

She looks up at Wash and smiles.

WASH

I just want her to be happy, preacher.

INT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – HOUSE – EVENING

Mal and Nico are in a small, expensive-looking bedroom. Pricey-looking collector's items occupy every flat surface.

Mal's on the WAVE MONITOR with Mr. Universe while Nico stands guard, pistol in one hand, flashlight in the other.

The SIREN still blares, muted somewhat inside, but still very distinct.

MAL (to Wave monitor)

Good as your word, Universe.

MISTER UNIVERSE

Just told their advance warning system sats that Reavers were coming. Their paranoia did the rest. You'd think by now they'd understand that the Reavers attack in patterns. It's just a matter of tracking—

MAL

(overlapping)

Uh, yeah, I think I hear something. Gotta go.

Mal shuts off the Wave monitor, sighs with relief.

NICO
It's bad karma, you know.

MAL
What?

NICO
Posing as Reavers.

Jayne comes in, carrying a flashlight and a black DISPLAY CASE.

JAYNE
Posin' as Reavers is brilliant, Mal! Should do it more often!

Pointed look from Nico.

MAL
We ain't—
(beat)
Got the goods?

Jayne opens the display case, revealing a COIN COLLECTION.

JAYNE
Easiest coin we ever made.
(leer)
Easy's I hear it is t'get Nico t'spread.

NICO
I'm standing right here.

JAYNE
'Course you are. Why say somethin' sweet about a lady ain't around to hear it?

Nico moves in to punch Jayne, but Mal steps between them.

MAL
If y'all're finished flirtin', I'd like to get back to the ship 'fore that siren stops and folk come outta their basements and see no Reavers, ugly as you might be. Best we be gone by then.

All three look at the window, expecting the siren to end on cue.

It doesn't.

MAL (cont'd)
Let's go!

EXT. HAVEN - THE WASHBURNE HOUSE - NIGHT

On the porch, Wash is stacking chairs and collecting plates, while talking to Bern, Millie, Derek, and Sissy. Ben is nowhere to be seen.

By the dying red embers of the bonfire, Zoe collects the bottles by the bonfire.

Book, smoking the last of his cigar, joins her.

BOOK
May I offer a helping hand?

ZOE
You're always welcome, Shepherd.

He picks up an empty bottle and tosses it into a small GARBAGE BIN.

Derek and Sissy head off, offering a farewell wave, which Book and Zoe return.

BOOK
So... Are you feeling a bit more... at home now?

They continue to clean, throwing trash into the bin or the burned out bonfire.

ZOE
Do you think I don't realize what you're doing, preacher?

No response from Book.

ZOE (cont'd)
You think I don't realize I don't belong here? You think I don't feel like there's not a place for me on Haven every minute that I'm here?

BOOK
So—

She stands up, and looks at the porch. Wash is telling a joke or tale to Millie and Bernabe. All three laugh hysterically.

ZOE
Because of him. He belongs here. He has a place. So I'll stay for him. Not forever, but for now. And, who knows? Maybe next week I'll love Haven, or Haven will love me. And that will have made it all worth it.

On the porch, Millie hugs Wash goodbye, and Wash and Bernabe share a half handshake, half “man-hug.” All three are still smiling.

ZOE (cont’d)

We may not enjoy every step of the path, preacher, but if we walk it with those we love, what's to complain about?

Book ponders for a beat, then drops the remains of his cigar into the bonfire.

BOOK

I’ll have to add that to one of my sermons some time. A beautiful sentiment.

(smiles)

I don’t believe they’d sleep through that.

Zoe smiles back warmly as they return to cleaning up.

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – TOWN SQUARE – EVENING


The SIREN continues to blare as the hover-mule rockets through the town square, around the fountain.

MAL

Go, Nico. I want to be back on Serenity long before—

A stream of smoke traces down from the church’s BELL TOWER—

—and a MISSILE smashes into the ground directly in front of the hover-mule.



Act Four

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – TOWN SQUARE – SECONDS LATER

The hover-mule, its front end battered, has crashed into the side of the fountain.

Its idling engine makes GRINDING NOISES that are even louder than the AIR RAID SIREN.

Mal and Jayne, in the back of the hover-mule, are still recovering. Nico is nowhere to be seen.

Twelve SOLDIERS in camouflage light armor, SWAT-style, complete with reflective, masked helmets and an array of weapons, appear from the shadows in all directions.

They quickly surround the hover-mule.

Jayne stands in his seat, pulling out his gun.

Mal draws his revolver with one hand and his COM UNIT in the other.

MAL (into com)
Kaylee! Simon! We've got trouble!

He fires at the nearest soldier. The bullet hits the man's armor, and doesn't even slow him.

MAL (into com)
Big trouble!

The soldier fires a STRANGE-LOOKING GUN at Mal, and there's a spark and smoke, but no bullets.

Instead, a dart jets out, trailing a thin, metallic line. The dart sinks into Mal's chest.

JAYNE
Get down!

He fires at the oncoming soldiers.

Mal looks down at the dart, and then follows the line back to the man who fired it.

The man has a small MILITARY-STYLE INSIGNIA on his armor.

It's the insignia of the ORION RECONDOS.

MAL (into com)
Orion Recondos! Bounty hunters! Get—

The soldier who tagged Mal pulls the trigger again, but this time, instead of a dart, a JOLT of electricity travels up the wire. It's a TASER and Mal drops, twitching.

JAYNE
Mal!

Jayne continues to fire, standing protectively over Mal, as the soldiers close in, weapons trained.

One fires his taser at Jayne, but Jayne manages to block it with his gun.

The wire tangles around the gun.

The soldier uses it to yank away Jayne's gun.

JAYNE
Gorram—

NICO (OS)
Down!

Jayne drops without hesitation, covering Mal's twitching body with his own.

Behind him, Nico rises from the fountain, sopping wet, mad-eyed, and firing a PISTOL in each hand.

Her sudden onslaught gives the soldiers pause. One bullet from her gun goes through a small space in the side of one soldier's helmet. He drops.

Then she CHARGES, rushing out of the fountain and over the hover-mule, using Jayne's broad back as a convenient stepping stone.

She hits the ground, drops the pistols, and draws two MILITARY-STYLE DAGGERS, continuing to charge at the soldiers.

Jayne is up in an instant. He draws his hunting knife and ploughs after her.

They close with the nearest soldiers.

Some soldiers draw knives; others swing their rifles at them.

The air-raid siren keeps BLARING.

Jayne and Nico fight shoulder-to-shoulder, a study in contrasts.

Jayne is big, bold and angry, using his weight and his bulk to drive the soldiers back.

He knocks down one soldier. Smashes another into the hover-mule so hard that his helmet cracks.

Nico is a tiny dervish with a gleeful grin. Her flashing daggers are everywhere at once. She slits the throat of one of her opponents, spraying blood across the plaza.

For a brief, glorious moment, it looks like they have a chance.

But the odds are stacked against them, and these soldiers are GOOD.

Three of the soldiers take Jayne down; a soldier hits Nico in the stomach, knocking the wind out of her. Both are borne down and beaten to the ground.

It's not pretty.

In the aftermath of the assault, the soldiers—bounty hunters— collect themselves.

MAN (OS)
(booming over the siren)
We about done here?

EXT. HAVEN - THE WASHBURNE HOUSE – NIGHT

Book steps quietly onto the porch—and is a bit surprised to find Zoe and Wash sitting together in the darkness, Zoe cradled in Wash’s arms.

BOOK
I’m sorry, I didn’t realize the two of you were out here.
Do you want me to turn on a light?

ZOE
(shakes her head)
We were looking up at the stars.

WASH
That’s one of my favourite things about Haven. The night.

For a beat, Book looks up into the darkness as well.

BOOK
I cleaned up the kitchen as best I could, but believe young Ben has crashed out for the night on your couch. I imagine he’ll still be there tomorrow, likely in desperate need of some coffee. And possibly a stern talking-to about the sins of indulgence.

Zoe and Wash smile.

ZOE
I’ll tell him you’re looking for him.

WASH
If you could let Millie know that Ben is very ill and won’t be showing up for work tomorrow, that would be much appreciated.

BOOK
I think that there will be more than one person not available for work tomorrow. That wine was... more than a bit potent.

ZOE
You going to be alright walking back, Shepherd?

BOOK
(kindly)
I believe I can make the walk under my own power,
thank you. My hair may be silver, but I'm not some
doddering old grandfather.

WASH
How about a godfather?

Pleasantly surprised look from Zoe.

BOOK
(delighted smile)
I look forward to it.

With a final nod, Book walks off into the darkness, leaving Zoe and Wash snuggling together.

EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – TOWN SQUARE – EVENING

Three ORION RECONDOS walk briskly out of the cathedral's front door.

The leader is SMILING JOHN TUNSTALL, six and a half feet of muscle and attitude, and nary a smile to be seen. He wears the same armour as his men, but no helmet. Instead, a cowboy hat.

Tunstall carries a large ROCKET LAUNCHER in one hand, which he casually hands off to one of his men as he approaches the scene at the hover-mule.

RECONDO
(barely audible over the sirens)
Target apprehended and prepped for travel, Captain
Tunstall.

He indicates Mal, who is unconscious and cuffed hand and foot.

Another recondo (TSAI) rushes up to Tunstall and points to Nico. She's conscious, but pinned down by two of the recondos, seething, while another points a rifle at her head.

TSAI
She killed McCord, sir.

TUNSTALL
Then McCord was sloppy. Who is she?

TSAI
Wasn't in the briefs. Possibly the new pilot.

TUNSTALL

Disable her.

The man aiming the rifle at Nico reverses the weapon and SLAMS the butt against her arm. There's a sickening CRUNCH.

Nico winces for only a second, then laughs.

A second blow, this one to the head, silences her.

TUNSTALL

Prepare the collateral targets for—

The SIREN cuts off.

Eerie silence for a beat. Two.

TUNSTALL

(looking around)

Move out. Now.

TSAI

What about the collateral targets?

Tunstall approaches Jayne, who struggles against three recondos trying to cuff him.

JAYNE

Best kill me now, Tiny, 'cause once I finish with these boys—

Tunstall's fist flashes out, smashing into Jayne's face. Jayne sags.

TUNSTALL

The collateral targets have been neutralized.

Tsai closes in on Jayne, a KNIFE in his hand.

TSAI

They're not neutralized for long, sir. They can easily—

Tunstall turns, silencing him. This isn't the first time the men have had this argument. He takes Tsai's knife, leans down and SLICES hard through the back of Jayne's boot, severing the ACHILLES TENDON. Jayne twitches and grunts, still unconscious.

TUNSTALL

(handing back the knife)

We're bounty hunters, not assassins. We are not paid to kill.

Tunstall immediately heads toward Mal.

TUNSTALL (cont'd)
Excellent job, gentlemen, but we need to move quickly.
Citizens will be arriving any time.

He hefts Mal easily over one shoulder and begins to walk across the square.

TUNSTALL (cont'd)
Move out!

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Kaylee stands near the pilot's station, fiddling with the com unit, looking panicked.

KAYLEE (into com)
Cap'n? Jayne?
(beat)
Nico?

Simon and River come in behind her, Simon looking every inch the hero, holding a shotgun.

SIMON
Nothing?

Kaylee shakes her head.

They look at each other, completely at a loss.

EXT. HAVEN – WASHBURNE HOUSE – NIGHT

Wash and Zoe lazily look up at the stars.

WASH
Lambie-toes.... Zoe...
(beat)
You do want to be here, don't you? I mean, you're happy,
right?

Zoe smiles and snuggles deep into Wash's arms.

ZOE
Right now, I'm exactly where I want to be.

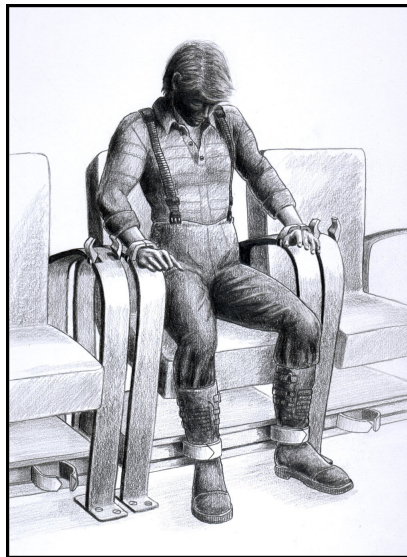
EXT. SAINT CHRISTOPHER – MOUNTAINS – EVENING

A dozen small SLEEK VESSELS of various makes lift off into the night, heading in different directions.

INT. BOUNTY HUNTER SHIP – SAME TIME

Mal wakes up slowly.

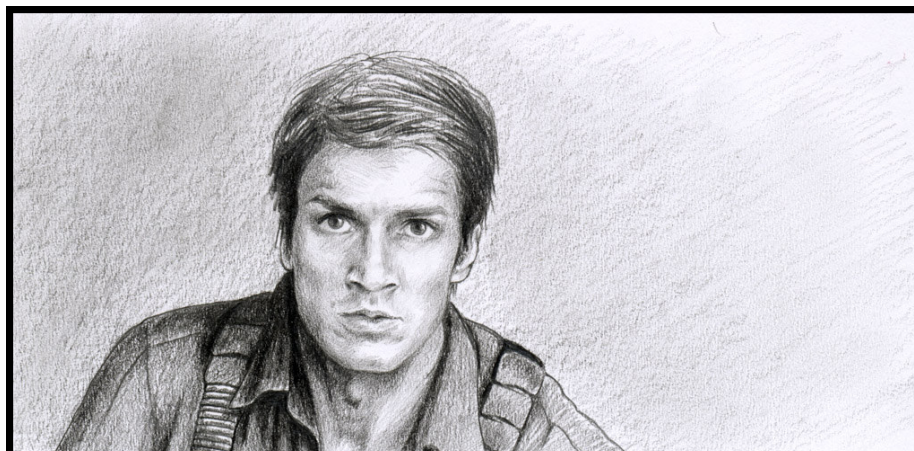
He sits in an uncomfortable metal chair, flanked by two other identical chairs. His hands and feet are cuffed in place.



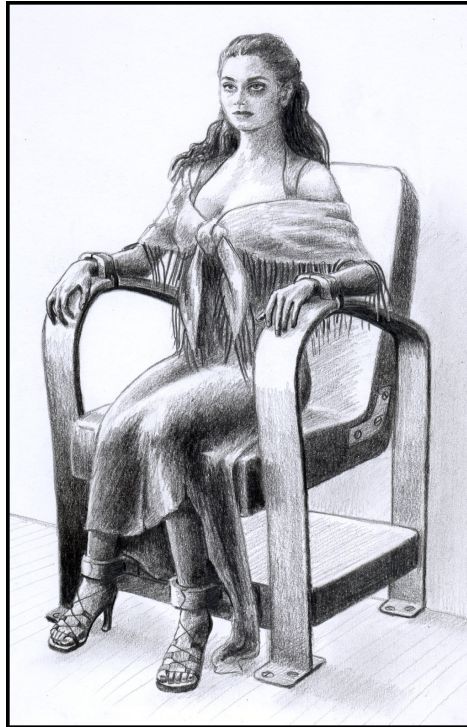
It's a professional-looking set-up. Mal isn't the first guy to be stuck here.

Groggily, he looks up, across the room.

His eyes go wide.



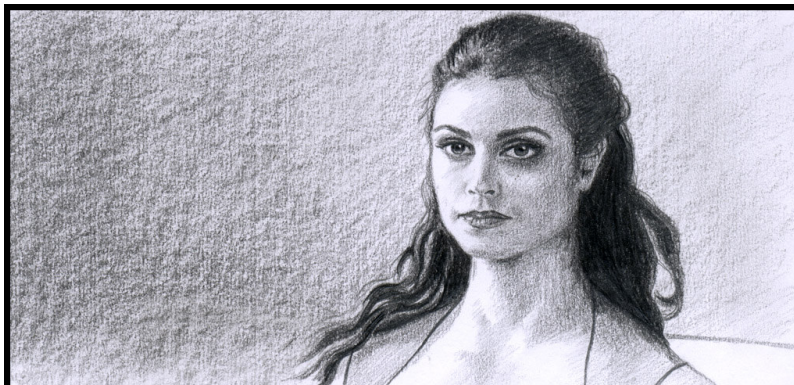
REVERSE ANGLE



A WOMAN sits directly across from him, no more than two meters away, cuffed to her own chair. She's as beautiful as ever, sitting serenely in her chair, ignoring her cuffs.

INARA SERRA looks up at him.

INARA
Hello, Mal.



BLACKOUT

TO BE CONTINUED...